



THE DISTRICT BRIDGE

Sharing Our Progress, Accomplishments, and Appreciation

SUMMER 2019

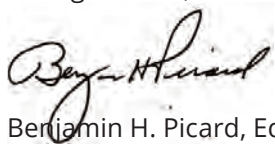
Dear Friends,

As a partner of our district, you know that we aim to provide children with an education that positions them for lifelong success and well-being. We regularly measure growth and achievement in traditional subjects like math, language arts, science, and social studies, so we can actively intervene to ensure learning is on track. We also assess students on their social and emotional skills development, because research shows that these “soft skills” are the personal attributes that position students for success in school and in life.

When students are working cooperatively with classmates, setting and attaining personal goals, making responsible decisions, and understanding the perspectives of others, they are participating in their education in a way that enables them to fulfill their learning potential. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is therefore a critical part of the curricula at every one of our schools. It is modeled by our teachers and taught intentionally, using acclaimed, evidence-based instructional practices.

This has exciting ramifications for our students, and we are delighted to share a bit about it with you in this issue of The Bridge.

With gratitude,



Benjamin H. Picard, Ed.D
Superintendent, Sunnyvale School District



OUR SCHOOLS

Bishop Elementary
Cherry Chase Elementary
Cumberland Elementary
Ellis Elementary
Fairwood Explorer
Lakewood Tech EQ
San Miguel Elementary
Vargas Elementary
Columbia Middle
Sunnyvale Middle

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Jeffrey Arnett
Michelle Maginot
Reid Myers
Nancy Newkirk
Bridget Watson

Doing better inside and out

School presents children with a variety of challenges, not all of them academic. A day of work and play naturally leads to new situations and complex emotions. Learning effective social-emotional skills empowers children to identify and process their feelings, choose how to behave in response, anticipate how their behavior might impact others, and communicate constructively about their needs or concerns.

Children who possess this kind of emotional intelligence are not only better able to navigate the challenges of the day, they make friends more readily, which can help them to feel more connected to school. Empathy is key. When children are able to relate to the joys, sorrows, and perspectives of peers, they can develop relationships, thrive in group settings, and build habits that enhance the productivity of any team.

Self-management is a tall order for small children, but studies show that while children come to school with varying levels of social-emotional competence, ***all are capable of developing and improving these skills.*** We see evidence of this in our classrooms every day!





Doing better in school

In our district, we provide formal SEL instruction designed to help children to build competence in five core areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making.

When students employ these skills in the classroom, respect underlies interaction, and all individuals are valued and encouraged to participate. Fewer disruptive behaviors or incidents of hurt feelings means teachers spend less time in classroom management and more time delivering what students need for success: engaging, quality instruction.

Promoting a positive climate in this way does more than make school more pleasant; studies repeatedly confirm that *students who have the benefit of regular, effective instruction in social-emotional skill-building consistently reach higher levels of academic achievement*. Enhanced focus, greater peer acceptance, increased personal resilience, and more effective communication skills may all be contributing factors in the measurable academic improvements students show after consistent delivery of quality SEL programs in the classroom.

Doing better in life

Elementary school success is only the start. Students who demonstrate self-management and positive social behaviors reach higher levels of achievement in school at all levels. They demonstrate increased concentration in adolescence and are more likely to graduate from high school, obtain a college degree, and to be employed in young adulthood.

Success in the workplace is another benefit. Employers tell us that soft skills are in high demand and are often the deciding factor between candidates in job interviews and promotion opportunities. When individuals can contribute to a more positive and productive environment, everybody wins.

Communities win, too. Individuals with strong soft skills show greater self-discipline and emotional resilience, and are less likely to become involved in destructive behaviors like self-harm or substance abuse, or to engage in criminal activity. That means more than just successful kids. It means a healthier community for us all.





Lakewood Tech EQ helps students bring their emerging social-emotional intelligence to the digital world. Nationally recognized in 2016 as a Common Sense Certified School for Digital Citizenship, the school combines technical skill-building with social-emotional skills development through explicit teaching about the productive and constructive use of technology and what it means to be a responsible citizen online and in real life.



We leverage our social-emotional classroom instruction with community expertise and resources. Acknowledge Alliance, Community Health Awareness Council, and YMCA's Project Cornerstone are among the many community service organizations partnering with us to help us provide quality SEL learning throughout our district every day.

Sunnyvale School District also partners with the Collaborative for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child, which provides mentoring and professional development so emerging and experienced teachers can help students grow socially, emotionally, and academically.



819 W. Iowa Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

www.sesd.org

Sign up for our e-news at

<http://sesd-district-digest.org/subscribe>

SSD has been nationally and locally recognized for its exemplary social-emotional instruction by organizations like The Aspen Institute, Acknowledge Alliance, and Ashoka.

Learn more at
www.sesd.org/Page/1207.

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